

# Barium Enema (lower GI)

**Why is it done ?** Gastrointestinal (GI) X-ray exams involve the use of barium (or a water soluble liquid that shows on x-rays), barium solutions, and x-ray machines. These are used to diagnose problems throughout the digestive tract such as, abdominal pain, unexplained weight loss, diarrhea, obstruction/blockages, bleeding, vomiting, intestinal tumors, ulcers, and digestive disorders. The Barium Enema test examines the colon and rectum. This test is considered to be safe and pose very little risk.

**How to prepare:** Preparation usually includes: a full bowel prep including: Bisacodyl tablets, Magnesium Citrate liquid, and Bisacodyl Suppositories.

On the day **before** your procedure:

**Breakfast:** Clear soup (any broth); strained fruit juice without pulp; flavored gelatin that is not red (do not add extra ingredients); soft drinks, black coffee or plain tea.

**Noon:** Clear soup (any broth); strained fruit juice without pulp; flavored gelatin that is not red (do not add extra ingredients); soft drinks, black coffee or plain tea.

**1:00 PM:** Drink one (1) full 8 oz. glass of water

**2:00 PM:** Drink one (1) full 8 oz. glass of water

**3:00 PM:** Drink one (1) full 8 oz. glass of water

**4:00 PM:** Drink one (1) full 8 oz. glass of water

**5:00 PM:** Clear soup (any broth); strained fruit juice without pulp; flavored gelatin that is not red (do not add extra ingredients); soft drinks, black coffee or plain tea.

**5:30 PM:** Drink 10oz bottle of Magnesium Citrate according to product recommendations. This product usually produces a bowel movement within 30 minutes to 6 hours.

**6:00 PM:** Drink one (1) full 8 fl oz glass of water.

**7:00 PM:** Drink one (1) full 8 fl oz glass of water.

**7:30 PM:** Take four bisacodyl tablets with one 8 fl oz glass of water. **Do Not Chew Tablets. (Be sure to read WARNINGS on package insert).** The tablets are to be

taken two hours after drinking the Magnesium Citrate liquid. Bisacodyl tablets generally produce bowel movements in 6 to 12 hours.

**8:00 PM:** Drink one (1) full 8 fl oz glass of water.

**9:00 PM:** Drink one (1) full 8 fl oz glass of water. Do not eat after 9:00 PM

## DAY OF PROCEDURE – DO NOT EAT OR DRINK ANYTHING

At least two hours before the examination unwrap the Bisacodyl Suppository and discard wrapper. While lying on your side with thigh raised, insert the suppository into the rectum and gently push in as far as possible. Retain the

suppository for at least 15 minutes, if possible, before evacuating, even if the urge is strong. Bowel evacuation usually occurs within 15 to 60 minutes. Patients requiring assistance should have a bed pan, commode or help readily available.

***Please tell the technologist if you have an insulin pump.***

**What to expect during the test:** The barium enema test takes around an hour to complete. During your barium enema, you'll wear a gown and be asked to remove eyewear and jewelry. The exam will be performed by a radiology technologist and a physician who specializes in diagnostic imaging (radiologist). An X-ray will be taken to make sure your colon is clean. You'll begin the exam lying on your side on a specially designed table. Then a lubricated enema tube will be inserted into your rectum. A barium bag will be connected to the tube to deliver the barium solution into your colon. If you're having an air-contrast (double-contrast) barium enema, air will flow through the same tube and into your rectum. The tube that's used to deliver the barium has a small balloon near its tip. When positioned at the entrance of your rectum, the balloon helps keep the barium inside your body. As your colon fills with barium, you may feel the urge to have a bowel movement. Abdominal cramping may occur. Do your best to hold the enema tube in place. To relax, take long, deep breaths. You may be asked to turn and hold various positions on the exam table. This helps ensure that your entire colon is coated with barium and enables the radiologist to view the colon from various angles. You also may be asked to hold your breath at times. A number of X-rays will likely be taken of your colon from various angles. After the necessary images are taken, the barium will be drained, the tube removed, and you will be allowed to use the restroom to expel any remaining barium. There may be additional imaging needed before you can leave.

**What to expect after the test:**

- You can resume your usual activities and normal diet immediately.
  - Drink plenty of fluids.
  - The barium given during the test may cause constipation, so a laxative or enema might be prescribed after the test.
  - It is normal for your stool to have a white or light color for up to three days after the test.
- 
- The results of your exam should be available to your physician within 24 hours after the test, Monday through Friday.
  - Your physician will discuss the test results with you.